

Moran Announces Incentives For Public Use of Conservation Reserve Program Lands

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will offer incentives to Kansas farmers and ranchers for opening up their land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to hunting, fishing and other recreational activities.

"This program will provide economic incentives to Kansas farmers and ranchers participating in the CRP program to open their land up for public use," Moran said. "It will provide outlets for outdoor sportsman who would not otherwise have access to these lands. These incentives will also create opportunities for small-town businesses as additional outdoor enthusiasts visit Kansas communities as a result of this program."

The goal of this incentive is to double public access by providing up to seven million acres of CRP land for public access in the next five years in participating states. The CRP public access incentive will be limited to CRP participants in the 21 states that already have public access programs, including Kansas. The incentive program permits partnerships with existing state public access programs to identify and mark tracts of land as publicly accessible and publish maps for hunters and recreation enthusiasts.

The public access incentive will pay \$3 per acre, per year, for the life of the CRP contract, provided the contract acres remain enrolled in the state public access program. CRP contracts are between 10 and 15 years. This public access incentive is available to CRP participants, with new or existing contracts, that voluntarily agree to open CRP land to public hunting, recreation, wildlife viewing and other recreational activities.

"This is a great incentive to help keep wildlife and hunting-friendly acres enrolled in the best conservation program in USDA," said Barth Crouch, Conservation Policy Director for the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and Kansas Pheasants and Quail Forever Council Secretary. "Those landowners who choose to take part in the conservation program are allowing the Kansas tradition of hunting and outdoor recreation to continue while also benefiting economically from the USDA incentives."

After environmental compliance requirements are complete, USDA will announce a sign up date when farmers and ranchers can begin to enroll at their local county FSA office.

Moran is a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

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